

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

January 24, 2024

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Secretary Mayorkas:

The numbers tell the tale: you have utterly failed to secure the southern border. According to a new report from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), a record-setting 860,000 illegal immigrants crossed into the United States without encountering a border official in fiscal year 2023 alone.<sup>1</sup> These “gotaways” outnumber the combined populations of Kansas City and St. Louis, the two largest cities in Missouri. At the very least, you owe the American people full transparency into what your Department knows about illegal immigrants who have entered our nation without being stopped or tracked.

It is abundantly clear that the longer you remain in office, the worse the crisis at our southern border becomes. The yearly number of gotaways has increased dramatically under your watch, up from nearly 600,000 in fiscal year 2022 and more than double the 389,515 in fiscal year 2021.<sup>2</sup> All told, nearly 2 million illegal immigrants have successfully evaded border officials during the Biden Administration. Furthermore, though your Department still has not yet released official numbers, border officials report that they encountered more than 300,000 illegal immigrants at the southern border last month—which would be an all-time high.<sup>3</sup> These unprecedented figures underscore the need for you to be fully transparent about your Department’s own accounting of the southern border crisis.

To date, your Department’s estimates have been totally opaque. The American people deserve direct, concrete answers from your Department regarding the scale and nature of the gotaways problem. Accordingly, please provide the following information by no later than February 6, 2024:

1. Please provide Congress with the Department of Homeland Security’s full estimates and methodology regarding individuals who have illegally crossed into the U.S. without encountering a border official since January 2021.
2. Does the Department of Homeland Security corroborate CBO’s estimate of 860,000 gotaways in fiscal year 2023?
3. How many gotaways does the Department estimate illegally crossed into the U.S. in fiscal year 2023 and were observed doing so?

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2024-01/59697-Demographic-Outlook.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/2810761/cbo-shock-860000-border-gotaways-2023/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/migrant-encounters-southern-border-hit-record-302k-december-sources-say>

4. How many gotaways does the Department estimate illegally crossed into the U.S. in fiscal year 2023 and were not observed doing so?
5. How many suspected terrorists, violent criminals, and other felons does the Department estimate are among the gotaways in fiscal year 2023?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Josh Hawley  
U.S. Senator